



## **Mini-Grant Program Information**

To be considered for the initial review, applications must be received by April 13, 2020 at 2:00 pm. Applications received after April 13 will be considered on a rolling basis until May 22, 2020 at 2:00PM.

---

***Refer Any Questions to:***

Montana Growth Through Agriculture Program  
Montana Department of Agriculture  
406-444-0134

***Legal Authority:***

MCA Sections 90-9-102 & 90-9-401 (Montana Code Annotated)

GTA@mt.gov

## **Program Information**

The Growth Through Agriculture Mini-Grant Program (Mini-Grant Program) is a branch of the Montana Growth Through Agriculture Program and was authorized by the 2009 Montana Legislature to encourage economic and agricultural development.

### **Goal: Strengthen and diversify Montana's agricultural industry**

The Mini-Grant Program works to strengthen and diversify Montana's agricultural industry. Through small grants, the program assists in the development of innovative agricultural products and processes to add value to the agriculture industry, create new jobs, and expand small business opportunities.

### **How the Program Works**

---

- All projects will need to demonstrate how they expand Montana agriculture, but given the current public health situation with COVID-19, special attention will be paid to projects that strengthen and expand local food offerings, distribution, and infrastructure.
- A review panel comprised of Department staff with expertise in agricultural marketing and business development will evaluate the applications and make funding recommendations to the Director of Agriculture.
- To qualify for consideration, proposals must have practical, near-term relevance involving education, promotion, marketing, travel or other business-related expenses that will stimulate expanded agricultural development, economic activity and employment growth.
- The maximum grant amount for any single application is \$5,000. However, education, promotion, marketing and travel projects are limited to \$2,500.
- Total anticipated funding available is \$50,000
- Any current Growth Through Agriculture Program recipient will be considered ineligible for a Mini-Grant.

<i>A previously rejected or partially funded proposal will be considered ineligible for mini-grant funding unless the Council approves such action.</i>
---

### **Deadlines for Application Submission**

Completed Mini-Grant Program applications may be submitted via the Webgrants system at [funding.mt.gov](http://funding.mt.gov).

To be considered for the initial review, applications must be received by April 13, 2020 at 2:00 pm. Applications received after April 13 will be considered on a rolling basis until May 22, 2020 at 2:00PM.

### **What Qualifies**

---

#### **General Criteria for Funding**

The Department of Agriculture may make a mini-grant award if it determines that the project is consistent with the goals of the Growth Through Agriculture Act and:

- 1) Primarily adds value to Montana's agricultural products,

- 2) Has the prospects for commercial success given current personnel, experience and resources of the applicant.
- 3) Has the prospects to create and/or retain jobs in Montana.
- 4) Primarily processes or adds value to Montana's agricultural products currently produced or potentially produced in the state.
- 5) Has the management structure to allow the Agriculture Development Council to reasonably conclude that the applicant will comply with ongoing reporting and monitoring activities.

### **Eligible Projects**

- Projects must strengthen and diversify Montana's agricultural industry.
- Assist the development of innovative agricultural business organizational improvements and the commercialization and marketing.
- Create new jobs and expand small business opportunities.

### **Eligible Costs**

Eligible costs under the Growth Through Agriculture Program include, but are not limited to:

- Education,
- Promotion,
- Marketing,
- Travel and
- Other business expenses related to agricultural development.

*\*\* Growth Through Agriculture funding cannot be provided for activities completed prior to funding approval of the project. However, on a case by case basis, project costs incurred within one year of contract execution may be approved to meet matching funds requirements. \*\**

### **Ineligible Costs**

- Salaries and wages
- Payment of institutional overhead or other indirect costs
  - These costs may be used as in-kind matching contributions from the applicant.
- Political purposes

### **Matching Funds**

For the purposes of the Mini-Grant Program, matching contributions are funds directed toward completing the project **in an amount that is at least equal to the Mini-Grant Program funds requested for the project.**

Matching contributions may not include:

- Other state grants.
- Expenses from normal day-to-day operations

Matching contributions may be provided in the form of:

- Cash
- In-kind services, limited to 10% of total match.
- Indirect or overhead costs

## ***Who Can Apply***

---

Proposals for funding are accepted from:

- Individuals
- Businesses and Industry Organizations
- Public and Private Agencies and Organizations
- Educational Institutions
- Local Governments

*Any applicant organizations other than Sole Proprietorships must be registered with the Montana Secretary of State prior to submittal of the GTA application. Any application from an organization that is not registered with the Montana Secretary of State will not be accepted.*

Applicants must demonstrate a proven ability to carry out all elements of the proposed project. In addition, applicants proposing to rely upon the expertise of another individual or organization to undertake any part of the project must clearly define the responsibilities of that party as well as provide evidence of that entity's willingness and demonstrated ability to undertake that area of responsibility.

## ***How to Apply***

---

Applications must be submitted through the State of Montana Webgrants system located at [www.funding.mt.gov](http://www.funding.mt.gov)

## ***How Projects are Selected***

---

The review panel will evaluate project applications based on the scoresheet in Appendix A to this document. The results of scoring will be presented to the Director of Agriculture for funding decisions.

Only complete proposals will be considered. No partial proposals will be considered.

### **Award Process**

Applicants selected for funding will be notified in writing. If accepted, a contract will be issued to the applicant for review and signature.

Selected projects must comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, licensing and regulations for funds to be awarded. Evidence of such compliance may be required before reimbursement is issued.

Applications not selected for funding will be notified in writing.

## ***Reporting Requirements for Funded Projects***

---

Project reports will be due January 31, 2021 and June 30, 2021. The Department of Agriculture reserves the right to modify reporting requirements over the course of the project.

The recipient may be required to make an oral report at the conclusion of the project.

## ***Other Considerations***

---

### **Ownership and Publication of Materials**

All information and materials generated by the proposed activity become the sole property of the State of Montana. The grant recipient will retain the right to utilize, reprint and distribute all said information and materials.

### **Liability**

The Montana Agriculture Development Council will not be held liable for any costs incurred by any firm for work performed in the preparation of and production of a proposal or for any works performed prior to the formal execution of a contract.

### **Confidentiality**

All written materials developed for project as a result of a grant and /or documents submitted to the Department, shall be considered public except any information in which there is a privacy interest and that interest and the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure of the personal, financial, and business information contained therein. If an applicant/funding recipient deems a document to be confidential, they are responsible to contact program staff.

### **Rights of Agriculture Development Council**

The Agriculture Development Council reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals received.
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and concurrence of applicant.
- Clarify the scope of this application, within the program requirements and with appropriate notice to all applicants, to best serve the interests of the State of Montana.
- Amend the application's specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice to all potential applicants.
- Require a good faith effort on the part of the project sponsors to work with the Council and the Department of Agriculture.
- Request a credit report, recent tax filing, or financial statement to clarify program eligibility.

## **Agriculture Marketing and Business Development Bureau**

*Contact the Agriculture Marketing and Business Development Bureau staff at (406) 444-9126 or by e-mail at [gta@mt.gov](mailto:gta@mt.gov) for assistance on your business and marketing needs.*

### Appendix A

#### **Mini-Grant Scoresheet**

##### **1) Is the Applicant Preparation Checklist Completed? (10 Points)**

##### **2) Mini-Grant project Summary (20 pts)**

- a. Does the applicant:
  - i. Describe the nature of the proposed activity, the nature of the business or organization and what the GTA financial assistance would be used for.
  - ii. Provide any relevant historical information on this project.
  - iii. Describe how will this project expand Montana Agriculture?
  - iv. Explain what impact it would have to Montana agriculture or specific agricultural industries in Montana?

##### **1) Montana Commodities (20 pts)**

- a. Does the Applicant:
  - i. Identify Montana-grown or raised commodities utilized or raised annually and the total volume over next five years.
- b. Describe:
  - i. Who they are currently sourcing these commodities from?
  - ii. Who do they plan to source from over the course of this project?

##### **2) Project Impacts (20 pts)**

- a. Does the applicant describe:
  - i. Economic Impacts on Agricultural Industries and the State of Montana
  - ii. Deliverables/Measureable Outcomes
    1. Including a bulleted list detailing what will be delivered to the Department at the end of the project.
  - iii. the degree of originality, innovation or uniqueness of the project

##### **3) Key Personnel (10 pts)**

- a. Does the proposal have key team member needed to carry out the project's work outlined in the proposal.

##### **4) Objectives (10 pts)**

- a. Does the applicant describe the major objectives and activities necessary to complete the project and timelines for each objective.
- b. Does the applicant define
  - i. Objectives: What you plan to accomplish
  - ii. Activities: How you plan to accomplish your objectives
  - iii. Outcomes: Changes that will result from your project (what will be different) eg. More customers, new products, more employees, etc.

- iv. Deliverables: Products your project will generate, eg. feasibility study, promotional materials, report & pictures detailing installation and outcomes of new equipment, etc.

**5) Budget (10 pts)**

- a. Does the project budget appear realistic?

Do matching funds appear realistic